

Translating Shop Signs into English in Sana'a's Streets: A Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract

The inappropriate use of English on bilingual shop signs in Yemen can be seen everywhere, which creates many problems in the communication process. In many situations, the signs may even fail to convey any relevant information at all to target language (TL) readers, which leads to confusion and frustration as well. This study, therefore, aims to examine and categorize the translation errors of the shop signs in the streets of Sana'a. The empirical analysis has revealed that almost one third of the corpus data (130 signs out of 398) contains translation errors. These errors, which vary in their degree of seriousness, could be generally classified into three categories: spelling, grammatical and lexical, with the last having the highest frequency. I assume the causes that stand behind these kinds of errors include translator's language incompetence, translator's carelessness, and the socio-cultural differences between English and Arabic. The paper suggests a couple of recommendations which can help avoid the occurrence of such errors. The study contributes not only to increase the awareness of translation errors in the public space of Yemen, but also attracts attention to the importance of research on shop signs, which in many occasions, is looked at as trivial or naïve.

Keywords: shop signs, translation errors, English, Arabic, Sana'a, source language/ text, target language/ text

1. Introduction: the present status of English in Yemen

In the last three decades, Yemen has been influenced by the process of modernization and globalization. Foreign languages, particularly English, are gaining growing importance in the country. Yemenis, in general, believe that English is necessary if they want to catch up with the movement of modernization which is essentially based on Western models. In the late twentieth century English has emerged as a major international language of science and technology as well as a significant additional language all over the world. It is "the medium of the Second Industrial Revolution; and international science and information, international business world organization and diplomacy, international tourism, aviation and shipping, entertainment such as sports, cinema, television and pop music, 60% of the world's radio broadcast, and 70% of its mail are encoded in English" (Loveday 1996:91). In other words, and as Lawrence (2012) puts it, English has become the lingua franca of the world. As a result, English has been given a special attention and employed in many spheres of Yemeni state of affairs like education, mass media, internet and commercial and business activities.

Although English is neither a national nor an official language and still occupies the status of a foreign language in Yemen, it is considered the most important foreign language. The prestigious status that English has in Yemen is noticeable in the emphasis of the education system and the marketplace on English. Formal foreign language education in Yemen begins with English when a student reaches grade seven. In other words, English is the only foreign language taught in public schools for at least six years, i.e. the three years of the Preparatory Stage plus the three years of the Secondary Stage. English is also taught from the first grade in the private schools. English language institutes and centers are scattered over almost all Yemeni cities and towns. Moreover, the Ministry of Education is now working on a plan which allows the introduction of English from the 4th grade. In fact, the plan has been already applied in some primary schools of the capital city of Sana'a.

Due to the increasing exposure to English language, especially after the advent of TV space channels and the use of computers and the Internet, the new generation feels curious about the use of this language, to appear more fashionable and up to date. The internet, as one form of information revolution, has recently become the most powerful driver of globalization.

The access to the internet has been made easier by the numerous number of internet cafés that appear in major population centers. Furthermore, due to the fact that “English has become the main language of popular culture and globalization as can be seen in advertising” (Gorter, Cenoz, Nunes, Riganti, Onofri, Puzzo, and Sachdva 2005: 7), a large number of shops, restaurants, hotels, banks and firms in the public space of Yemen have their signs and price lists in English. Commercial shop signs in Yemen are part of the country’s linguistic landscape, alongside billboards, street names, road signs, and place names. English is widely used in Yemeni cities for local advertising, business, and commercial naming. However, local advertising and commercial naming tend to exploit English both in order to attract consumers’ attention (and sell goods and services) and because it is associated with globalization, modernity, and prestige. As a result, bilingual shop signs, mainly Arabic-English, have become very common in the streets of Yemeni cities.

2. Bilingual Shop Signs

The term “sign” is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (2007), as “a characteristic device attached to or placed in front of an inn or shop, as a means of distinguishing it from others or directing attention to it; in later use commonly a board bearing a name or other inscriptions, with or without some ornament or picture”. From the marketing and advertising perspective, a sign is “a device placed on or before a premise to identify its occupants and the nature of the business done there or to advertise a business or its products” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014).

The representation of texts in more than one language on a sign is called a bilingual sign (or more broadly a multilingual sign). The phenomenon of globalization and the position of English as an international language are among the main factors which lead to the spread and the increasing use of bilingual shop signs in different countries. In Yemen, bilingual Arabic-English signs are very dominant. They spread over 52% of the public space in the country in comparison to the monolingual signs with only 45% (Al-Athwary 2012).

In the literature on linguistic landscape (Backhaus 2006; Cenoz & Gorter 2009; Kallen 2009), bilingual or multilingual signs are generally categorized into “public” (like government institutions, street and road names) and “private” (like commercial and business signs and private announcements), though various terms are used alternatively. Unlike public signs which have many basic functions of directing, prompting, restricting and compelling (see Guo 2012), commercial shop signs, in general, are most probably meant for promoting and advertising goods. Bilingual Arabic-English signs, in particular, have another drive pertinent to the role of English as a sign of globalization, and modernity. Shop owners as well as communicators are motivated by the fact that to be more prestigious and fashionable you should use English in one way or another. A second motive is that the English used in shop signs, due to some social and economic factors in some business areas, is also meant for foreigners (Al-Athwary 2012: 29). From a linguistic point of view, and as Al-Kharabsheh, et al. (2008) state, commercial shop signs enjoy a number of linguistic features. First, they represent authentic materials rather than texts prepared for the purposes of translating. Second, each shop sign represents a whole text in itself in consideration of its social and cultural contexts, not undervaluing the importance of non-linguistic elements such as pictures which have their own bearing on meaning. Finally, shop signs are normally encapsulated in short linguistic structures; that is, their structures do not exceed that of words, phrases, and compounds. This linguistic property makes each word enjoy a greater semantic status than it would have in other larger structures.

No doubt that English translations used in shop signs is employed for a purpose of some kind or another. This fact is emphasized by Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002) that all texts, including translations, are produced for a purpose. This truth is particularly clear in translating what can broadly be classed as “consumer-oriented texts”, texts which either try to persuade the public to buy something, or tell purchasers how to use what they have bought, or advise on commodities that might be bought or courses of action that might be taken (p. 207).

As a method of advertising and a form of consumer-oriented texts, a bilingual shop sign should be a successful tool of communication whose language is effective and free from any kind of linguistic deviations or translation errors. Standard English version of shop signs that may perform any intended functions should at least meet the following basic linguistic specifications: correct spelling, correct and precise grammar, choice of appropriate words, use of frequent words and the consideration of cultural differences. The translation of shop signs is by no means an easy task, though they may contain just a few words. Shop signs, as crucial means, exhibit increasing importance in the global advertising. One problem may bilingual shop signs suffer from is their having different translation and linguistic errors of varying degrees of seriousness.

In the Yemeni context, the mistranslated shop signs are extremely embarrassing when a passer-by who knows English or a foreigner encounters them. The problem of translation errors found in Sana'a's streets is the focus of the present study and will be elaborated shortly in the subsequent sections.

3. Research Problem and the Purpose of the Study

Bilingual Arabic-English shop signs have become more and more common in the public space of large cities, such as in stores, shopping centers, malls, hotels, restaurants, private banks, hospitals and clinics. However, many of these signs have apparently not been translated by professional translators or people who know English very well; inappropriate use of English on such signs can be seen everywhere, which creates many problems to the communication process. In many situations, the signs may even fail to convey any relevant information at all to English speakers, which leads to confusion and frustration as well.

The main purpose of the present study, then, is to examine the translation errors of the shop signs in the streets of Sana'a, categorize them, find out their frequency of occurrence and provide recommendations to avoid them. In other words, the present paper seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To compute statistically the frequency of occurrence of translation errors.
2. To identify and analyze the different types of errors.
3. To provide, on the basis of the study results, suggestions to avoid the occurrence of such translation problems.

Therefore, the study, which is the first of its kind in the Yemeni context as the researcher believes, contributes not only to increase the reader's awareness of such translation errors in the public space of Sana'a, but also to attract his/her attention to the importance of research on shop signs which in many cases is looked at as trivial or naïve.

4. Review of Literature

Although it is a recent area of linguistic study, there are many works which have been conducted on shop signs. The majority of such works, however, deal with the issue from a linguistic landscape point of view, i.e. they focus only on the visibility of languages in the public space of a given territory (see, Al-Athwary 2012; Ariffin and Husin 2013; Dimova 2007; Griffin 2004; Lawrence 2012; MacGregor 2003; Stewart and Fawcett 2004; Wang 2013). Issues like number of languages appear on shop signs, the function and structure of signs, and language policies of the concerned authorities in a given linguistic landscape are discussed in detail.

On the other hand, some other works deal with the topic from a pragmatic and a sociolinguistic perspective. El-Yasin and Mahadin (1996) conduct a pragmatic study of shop signs in Jordan which attempts to find out the function of shop signs in general and that of foreign names used in shop signs in particular. After analyzing the customers' attitudes toward foreign names, the authors conclude that shop signs using foreign names on them aim at promoting goods and services. A similar sociolinguistic study on Jordanian shop signs is carried out by Mansour (2013). The focus in this study is on classifying shop signs according to language choice and also on people's attitudes and opinions toward using both foreign and Arabic names on shop signs. Khosravizadeh and Sanjareh (2011) is another sociolinguistic work which investigates the views of people from the two aspects of age and education about the spread of English on shop signs and brand-naming in Tehran, Iran. For the variable of age, the younger generation always associate the use of English to prestige, modernity and attraction and has a strong desire to use English words and alphabet than older generations. Regarding the variable of education, the authors conclude that as the level of education rises the enthusiasm for the use of English fades.

The researcher's interest in dealing with shop signs in the present study is totally different. Here, the English of shop signs is analyzed from translational and linguistic perspectives. The focus is on the translation and linguistic errors found in shop signs. What follows is an account of the previous studies that deal somehow with the same topic.

The great deal of research on the topic of sign translation has been conducted in China in the last five years and it may continue in future. With China's fast economic development, especially with the host of the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 World Expo, the study of English translation of public signs has become a very hot topic. Among many others, (Guo 2012; Ko 2010; Liu 2013; and Qiannan 2012) are just examples of such studies. All these works, however, concentrate only on the translation problems of "public signs" (those signs which refer to warnings, instructions, notices, directions, etc. and found in public transportations, tourist sites, main roads, hotels, and public institutions, and come in the form of full sentences, orders, or short paragraphs).

Also, all these studies revolve around one and the same issue of functions, and strategies of the public signs translation in the Chinese context in general and the analysis and categorization of translation errors of such signs in particular. It is important to note here that the nature of linguistic construction of bilingual public signs differs from that of bilingual shop signs. Whereas the former may contain one or more complete sentences indicating warnings, orders, etc., the latter contains only shorter linguistic structures such as single words, compounds or maximally phrases. As a result, the strategies of translating the two kinds of signs may also differ, and consequently the translation problems and errors resulting from such strategies may not be the same.

Al-Kharabsheh, Al-Azzam and Obeidat (2008) is the only study which tackles the topic of shop signs from a translational point of view. The authors exert a considerable effort identifying and classifying the translation errors in 165 Jordanian shop signs. They investigate the linguistic (word-order, wrong lexical choice, etc.) and extralinguistic (socio-cultural and promotional) factors that lie behind such errors. They conclude that the former set of factors leads to what they called “information skewing” and the latter has a great impact on the way shop signs are verbalized. The corpus of 165 shop signs used in this work is, however, much smaller than that of 398 shop signs used in the present study. Moreover, Al-Kharabsheh, et al. (2008) are elective in documenting the shop signs, i.e. they select only the mistranslated signs displayed in the public environment of Jordan. Methodologically speaking, this may violate the principle of representativeness of the population. Another methodological shortcoming of Al-Kharabsheh, et al.’s study is the inclusion of the monolingual (either Arabic-only or English-only) signs in the corpus (see p. 727) and consider them as cases of translation. Translation usually involves the presence of two texts, source text (ST) and target text (TT) in the same sign. The question here is: how can we judge that the communicators first intend to translate the sign, but then they “avoid translation”, as the authors claim, and then escaped to “foreignization” in translating for example “mahalaat hai laif”, and “Sweety Jeans”, “Bata”, etc.?

In the Yemeni context, Al-Athwary (2012) investigates shop signs and public signs, both monolingual and multilingual, from a linguistic landscape perspective. He focuses on the visibility of languages in the public space of Sana’a, their degree of dominance, their symbolic and socio-cultural functions. The study claims that though the speech community in Yemen is monolingual in Arabic, English appears in 53% of the signs surveyed. It is a significant indication that English is gaining a growing and competing position in the social reality of the public space in Yemen. Spreading increasingly in the Yemeni public cityscape, the phenomenon of written Arabic-English bilingualism needs to be further probed from different aspects, linguistic, translational, and sociolinguistic. Because of this, and as one of further researches recommended by Al-Athwary (2012), the present study has come into existence. So far, no research, to the best of my knowledge, has been conducted on shop signs from a linguistic and translational point of view. The present study is, therefore, the first attempt in this respect.

5. Research Methods and Procedures

The data collected for the present study is a sample of 398 shop signs. The sample is basically based on Al-Athwary (2012) in which a corpus of 1500 public and private signs is investigated. The data have been collected randomly via a digital camera in three main streets of the capital city of Sana’a. The selected areas of the capital city of Sana’a exhibit a great concentration of shop signs where the major commercial activities take place. The sample is random in the sense that the 398 items are documented based on whether or not they carry translation errors. Then, the two parameters of well-translatibility and mistranslateability are applied. Mistranslated signs will be counted and analyzed. The purpose of gathering a random sample is to show to which extent translation errors spread in the public space of Sana’a.

The shop signs sample only includes the bilingual Arabic-English signs and exclude the monolingual ones, be they Arabic-only signs or English-only signs, because both are beyond the scope of this study and have nothing to do with the process of translation.

The data collected are relatively and comparatively much larger in comparison with other similar studies on translation errors of shop signs (cf. Ko 2010 and Al-Kharabsheh et al. 2008). In terms of sample methodology, it is postulated that the larger the sample, the more precisely it represents the target population. So, being quite large, the sample is consistent with this postulation.

The data include not only bilingual signs that are found in the façades of stores, but also all private signs promoting and advertising any type of business, either be it an office, a hospital, a school or the like. On the other hand, public signs (those of government and public institutions) are not included in this study due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of them is not bilingual; almost all of them are monolingual Arabic-only signs. Hence, they are of no use for the topic of this study.

In some cases, a single shop sign may carry more than one error of some kind. To illustrate such cases, let's take the following sign as an example: *NATSSPLCEHDDA*. This translation, which is found in one of the collected shop signs, stands for the Arabic phrase *baha:ra:t wa mukasara:t haddah*, meaning 'Hadda (for) nuts and spices'. This sign has at least four errors: spelling (nuts and spice), word formation (no space between words), grammatical (dropping of 'and') and transliteration (Haddah) as will be elaborated in the subsequent sections.

Examples illustrating the translation errors found in the shop signs will be presented as follows: a transliteration of the Arabic script is given first and put between square brackets followed by the inappropriate English translation as it appears in the sign. To show the incorrectness of the translation, the TT is marked initially by an asterisk. The whole example will be written in italics and appear like in the illustration below.

[al-khawlanilil-zabi:b wa l-mukassara:t wa l-bun al-yamani]

**ALKHAULANI GRABS ALMKONDS*

Only a sample of the mistranslated shop signs can be displayed in this paper for spatial limitations.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 The Numerical Data

The collected data are first analyzed statistically in order to know the number of signs that contain translation errors. As Table (1) shows, out of 398 shop signs, 130 items (32.66 %) are attested to be faulty or mistranslated.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Mistranslated Shop Signs

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF SIGNS	%
Shop signs with errors	130	32.66
Shop signs without errors	268	67.34
Total	398	100

Then, and as a second step, the 130 mistranslated shop signs are analyzed in order to detect and compute the number of the translation errors. It has been found that some signs of the sample contain more than one error of some kind. The analysis shows that the total number of translation errors that appear on the 130 faulty shop signs is 156 errors.

This considerable number of translation and linguistic deviations, which represents approximately one third of the total sample, provides a general picture of the extent to which bilingual signs' textual content deviated from correct forms and how serious the errors are. These numerous errors will inevitably cause great inconvenience and trouble for both foreigners visiting Yemen and English-speaking Yemenis and most seriously make an awful impression on them. To put it differently, one problem which flawed shop signs pose is confusion and lack of comprehension on the part of foreigners who are not familiar with Arabic and pay attention only to English content of the signs they have exposure to in Yemen. By passing of time such translation problems may be more serious and affect, in some way, the reputation of a whole country. Gue (2012), for example, argues that the frequent problems in the translation of public signs degrade China's international status as a major role on the global platform. Translators as well as local authorities in Yemen should not neglect such errors and react immediately.

As a final step, the 156 translation errors are classified into categories and their frequency of occurrence is computed. Generally speaking, all types of errors can be categorized under the umbrella of "translation". That is, any type of error is made within and due to the process of translation. The analysis shows that translation errors occurring on faulty signs can be classed into five categories. Table (2) presents these types and their frequency of occurrence and percentages.

Table 2: The Different Categories of Translation Errors

Translation Error Category	Frequency of Occurrence	%
Orthographic errors	44	28.21
Grammatical errors	20	12.82
Word order	16	10.25
Transliteration errors	24	15.39
Inappropriate lexical choice	52	33.33
Total	156	100

Translation errors found in the collected data are varying from the simple errors like orthographic mistakes to the more serious ones, like the use of the inappropriate equivalents of the target language (TL) for the source language (SL) ones. As the numerical data show, these two extremes of the scale get the highest frequencies of occurrence with 52/ 33.33% for the inappropriate lexical choice and 44/ 28. 21% for spelling mistakes, followed by transliteration errors with 24/ 15.39%. It can be safely claimed that the first three categories of errors occur on the linguistic level, whereas the last two occur on the cultural level. Dickins et al. (2002: 29) state that general cultural differences are sometimes bigger obstacles to successful translation than linguistic differences. That's why the choice of inappropriate equivalents and transliteration problems rank among the first three high frequencies of occurrence.

What follows is a detailed account of translation problems and their various categories. A sizeable number of examples of mistranslated shop signs of the capital city of Sana'a will be examined, analyzed and related to the highlights of literature. In case an example of sign shows more than one error, the focus is only on the error belongs to the category under discussion.

6.2 Analyzing the Categories of Translation Errors

6.2.1 Orthographic Errors

Having a quick glance at the shop signs in Sana'a's streets, it is not difficult to recognize spelling mistakes, which involve wrong spelling of a word, or missing or adding of one or more letters in a word. Two thirds of such mistakes are related to vowel letters. Misspellings found vary from the simple to the serious ones. To illustrate this category of errors, consider the following examples:

- (1) [*mamlakat at-tifl*]
*BABY HAUSE
- (2) [*ruma:ntik lil-utu:r wa mustahdhara:t at-tajmi:l*]
*Romantic FOR PARFUMS & MAKEUPS
- (3) [*maktabat al-ahmadi*]
*Al-Ahmadi Stationary
- (4) [*sa:lat an-nokhbah lil-bilya:rdu wa kufi shub*]
*AlnoKhba hall for Belyardo & Coffee shoP

Misspellings in 1 and 2 are simple and occur because they are written as they are pronounced, hence we get *hause* for *house* and *parfums* for *perfume(s)*. Instances of such case are plenty in the sample: *drycleen* for *dry-clean*, *Riad* for *Riyadh* and *phon* for *phone*. The dropping of the word-final *e* may be explained by the fact that the character *e* is not pronounced (silent) and consequently is not represented in the graphical shape of the word. What is surprising is the addition of *e* in words like *flates* for *flats*, *Internate* for *internet* in some signs attested in the collected data. Here, the translator or writer of such signs more probably generalizes that any word ending with *t* should end with the silent character *e*. Example 3 contains a serious mistake since it has brought a radical change to the message of the sign. *Stationary* (with *a* before *r*, meaning 'motionless', 'not moving') is erroneously used for *Stationery* (store) (with *e* before *r*, meaning 'writing materials'). It is found in three signs of the data. The error in 4 is also striking. The Arabic loanword *Belayrdo* is used instead of its English counterpart *Billiards*. For a foreigner, words like *stationary* and *belyardo* are really confusing and disappointing.

There is another type of orthographic errors which is usually called "typographical" mistakes (typing and copying mistakes). Such mistakes are usually committed not because the translators are poor spellers, but more probably because they are poor typists. This includes the insertion or deletion of a space between words in a phrase or compound. Out of 44 orthographic errors, 14 are typographical ones.

The following are just examples:

- (5) [al-mukhattat al-mutaka: mil li-safrik]
*Your Coplete Planner
- (6) [abu akram lil-'aqara:t wa l-khadama:t al-'a:mmah]
*Abu Akram Rualestate Genral Services
- (7) [shumayla ha:ri su:bar stur]
*Shumaila Hari super store
- (8) [bahara:t wa mukassara:t haddah]
*NATSSPLCEHDDA

The missing of *m* in *coplete* in 5 is an apparent typing mistake while the error in 6 can be considered as a copying one, especially if we know that this sign is painted rather than typed or computerized. It is supposed here that the translator spelled the word *rualestate* correctly, but his handwriting was so poor that the sign maker while copying was not able to distinguish between *a* and *u* and *a* and *e*. Shop signs in 7 and 8 are instances of typographic errors pertinent to the use of space which directly has a great impact on word formation process. Inserting a space between *super* and *store* is distorting the meaning of the compound *superstore* of 'a very large supermarket' as meant by the sign. Opposite to this is the omission of a space between *real* and *estate* in 6 which, together with the copying mistake, make the word *rualestate* unintelligible. The translation in 8 is intolerable at all. Leaving no space between words and the incorrect spelling of *nuts* and *spice* in addition to other grammar errors make it so difficult to decode the message of this sign which should run like this: *Nuts and Spices of Haddah* or *Haddah (for) Nuts and Spices*.

In fact, most of the mistakes stated above are due to carelessness and irresponsibility of the translators or the printers. And probably everyday these wrong spelling signs are spotted by more and more TL readers and foreigners and at the same time these signs leave a poor impression to foreign visitors on the English proficiency of Yemeni people. Most of these errors can be easily avoided by referring to a bilingual dictionary.

Apart from errors, it has been noticed that the translators of shop signs in Sana'a prefer using the spelling of American English in a number of signs. This includes words like "jewelry" and "center" instead of the British English "jewellery" and "centre", respectively. This strategy reduces the possibility of making spelling mistakes due to the fact that American English of such words is a little easier than the British one, and hence becomes favorable to English language users.

6. 2.2 Grammatical Errors

Most of grammatical deviations attested are simple and straightforward and don't seriously affect the conveyed message. These include the inappropriate use of the plural form, and repetition of the conjunction *and* (the ampersand (&)) in certain syntactic structures. At the same time, there are instances of signs in which target text (TT) structure seems odd and somehow disturbed. It refers to the insertion of the superfluous preposition *for* in TTs. The above mentioned points are exemplified as follows:

- (9) [mujawhara:t al-ami:n]
*Al Ameen for Jewelrys
- (10) [al-ufuq layn – safariya:t siya:hah hajj umrah khadama:t ukhra]
*OFOUQ LINE TRAVEL & TOURISM & HAJJ & UMRAH
- (11) [markiz ash-sharq lil-mafru:sha:t]
*AL SHARQ FOR FURNITURE CENTER

The grammar mistake in 9 is twofold: firstly, the word *jewelry* is usually a mass noun and is not inflected with the plural marker *-s* and secondly, if it were pluralized, it would be *jewelries* but not *jewelrys*. Mother tongue interference is very obvious in 10. Found in a couple of shop signs, the repetition of the conjunction *and* (&) when we have a list of items in a phrase is a characteristic syntactic feature of Arabic language, but not of English. The translation problem in 11 is more frequent and more serious. It refers to the insertion of the superfluous preposition *for* in TTs with backgrounding, so to speak, the word indicating the store type, which is *CENTER* in this case (the exact equivalent of Arabic *markiz*). The proper translation of ST of this shop sign is either *Al Sharq Center for furniture* or *Al Sharq Furniture Center* with the first being the most appropriate equivalent of ST. Similar grammatical errors are found in five signs of the data.

Another commonly seen grammatical error is the misuse of the part of speech of words.

- (12) [magha:sil wa makwa al-mukhta:r al-utumati:kiyyah al-hadi:tha
*AL-MOKHTAR FOR DRYCLEEN
- (13) [tuwin ta:warz li-sira:fah wa t-tahwi:la:t al-ma:liyyah
*Twin Towers for Exchange & Money transform
- (14) [almarkiz al-lubna:ni al-yamani lis-sam']
*Lebanese Yemenian Hearing Center

In 12 and 13, the verbs *DRYCLEEN* and *transform* are used to replace the nouns *dry-cleaning* (or *dry-cleaver's*) and *transfer* to stand for SL *magha:sil* and *tahwi:la:t*, respectively. The use of the adjective *Yemenian* for *Yemeni* in 14 is really embarrassing in the sense that this sign is translated by a person who doesn't know English very well. The translator draws on overgeneralization. He/ she thinks that the adjective derived from a name of a country like *Yemen* is something similar to adjectives like *Jordanian*, *Egyptian*, *Palestinian*, etc. derived from their noun counterparts, *Jordan*, *Egypt*, *Palestine*, respectively, especially when we know that the nationality adjectives with the suffix *-ian* are very common in the country-nationality paradigm.

The last category of grammatical mistakes occurs at the level of morphology, that is the misuse of compounds. Observe the two examples below.

- (15) [makhzan al- 'alma:ni lil-adwiyyah wa al-mustalzama:t at-tibiyah
*AL-ALAMANI STORE
- (16) [markiz ar-rayya:n lil-mala:bis al-ja:hizah
*AL RIYAN READY CLOTHES CENTER

The word *STORE* in 15 is erroneously translated to refer to the compound noun *drug-store*. The Arabic *makhzan* alone usually means 'a store/ a shop', but the coexistence of the expression *lil-adwiyyah* entails that this sort of business is a drug-store or pharmacy. Similarly, in 16 the target compound adjective *ready-made* is replaced by the single adjective *READY*, yielding the meaningless expression *READY CLOTHES*. The possible explanation of this error is that the SL *al-ja:hizah* usually means both 'ready' and 'ready-made' in Arabic. Being unaware of the compound *ready-made*, the translator uses the single word *ready* instead.

To sum up, most of grammatical errors are not as noticeable as spelling errors, but they are still disturbing and annoying since they not only show the irresponsible attitude of the translator, but also expose the poor proficiency and grasp in the English language of the translator. Dickins et al. (2002: 96) state that "it is the grammatical level where translation loss is generally most immediately obvious". Such translation loss which is manifested by grammatical mistakes, like those stated above, usually arises out of translator's language incompetence.

6.2.3 Word Order

Word order translation errors should have been discussed in section 6.2.2 above. But, in fact, it has been found that some translation errors involve linguistic deviations which affect the structure of larger syntactic units, i.e. phrases rather than specific grammatical elements and particles such as prepositions, plural markers, etc. highlighted in the previous section. Further, errors made by wrong word order represent a considerable number of the faulty shop signs, namely 16 signs. Due to these two reasons, word order translation errors are elaborated in this separate section.

English has its own word order at the phrase and compound levels which contrasts with that of Arabic. Any change in this order while translating inevitably affect the way information is organized and consequently results in an obscure message of ST. The following instances are sufficient:

- (17) [su:bar ma:rkit niyu: ma:rt]
*Super Market NEW MART
- (18) [mata:'im i:jil juld]
*RESTAURANT EAGLE GOLD
- (19) [abu jala:l li-tija:rat al-muba:yl]
*ABO JALAL FOR TRADE MOBILE

Illustrations in 17 - 19 show that the word order of TL is violated. The constituent elements of TT should appear on these shop signs like this: *NEW MART Supermarket*, *EAGLE GOLD RESTAURANT* and *ABU JALAL FOR MOBILE TRADE*, respectively.

In other words, the shop names *New Mart* and *Eagle Gold* in 17 and 18 should come before the store type, *supermarket* and *restaurant*, respectively. In 19, the constituent *mobile* as a pre-modifier should come before the headword *trade* in the noun phrase *mobile trade* instead of *trade mobile*. From the perspective of diagnosis of errors, most of word order errors are attributed to interlingual errors on the culture level, which are mainly caused by mother tongue interference. Some features of SL, i.e. Arabic, seem to be transferred to TT of shop signs. The SL feature in this case refers to the reservation of the Arabic word order.

There are two cases of shop signs in which errors of word order are not only caused by SL interference, but also by another extra-linguistic factor. They are presented in 20 and 21 below.

(20) [as-samma:n lil-aqmishah wa l-mutarraza:t]

*Textile & Embroidery AL-SAMMAN

(21) [abi:r ash-sharq li-arqa al-utu:r wa l-'u:d]

*FOR HIGH CLASS PERFUMES AND AOOD ABEER ALSHARQ

Similarly the shop names *Al-Samman* and *Abeer Alsharg* in 20 and 21 should be placed at the beginning of TT, *AS-SAMMAN Textile & Embroidery* and *ABEER ASH-SHARQ FOR HIGH CLASS PERFUME AND AOOD*, respectively. The word order problem here is very striking and may be peculiar only to Yemeni shop signs. The errors are mainly caused by the method in which the constituent elements of TT are arranged. The sign maker arranges these elements according to the order of ST (Arabic script), i.e. as it appears on the shop sign. The name of the shop is put at the beginning of ST and on the right side of the shop sign followed by the rest of the phrase. Then, the TT is put in the same order of ST, i.e. the shop name in TT is put exactly beneath its ST counterpart without considering the word order difference between SL and TL. All other 11 cases of word order errors exhibit the same tendency of word order deviation.

In order to come up with the proper translation of a shop sign, not only does the translator need to think about its form and meaning, but also they should pay attention to the acceptability of the translation. They cannot put them in the way we use our native language which makes the translation obscure and inconsistent with English linguistic rules or idiomatic expressions, which cannot be accepted by English native speakers. Therefore, in the translation of signs, we have to learn to think in English instead of Arabic. The researcher, therefore, agrees with Al-Kharabsheh et al. (2008) who claim that word order should not be undervalued or taken lightly in translation as it plays a key role in producing the right lexical links and relationships that would assist in delivering a correspondingly equivalent message in the TL (p. 721).

6.2.4 Transliteration Errors

Transliteration (or Romanization) as a strategy of translation involves the use of TL spelling conventions for the written representation of SL expressions. The advantage of a transliteration system is that it allows the reader to reconvert the English back into Arabic script (Dickins et al. 2002: 36). Transliterating shop signs by using Roman characters are of no use to TL readers and performs only one purpose intended by shop owners, i.e. to show modernity and prestige.

Like grammar errors, some of transliteration errors are slight and have no effect on the conveyed message of shop signs. The focus, then, will be on the phenomena of diacritization (vowelling) and gemination (consonant lengthening) which are related to the transliteration process and usually lead to more serious translation problems. Such problems are enhanced by the fact that the use of diacritics (including *shadda*, the diacritic of gemination) is usually restricted to the early years of formal education and the sacred Quranic texts and do not usually appear in most Arabic printed materials including texts displayed on (shop) signs in a given public space. The loss of the internal diacritics (such as short vowels or *shadda*) makes ST ambiguous and consequently leads to unintelligible TT. Consider the following signs as examples.

(22) [malbu:sa:t zama:ni]

*ZMANI

(23) [sama suft]

*SMA SOFT

(24) [saydaliyyat ar-rayya:n]

*AL-RYAN PHARMACY

(25) [markiz azha:r as-safi:r]

*Al-Sfeer Flowers Center

- (26) [kulliyat ar-ruwwa:d lil-'ulu:m at-tibbiyyah wa tiqaniyyah]
* AL-ROWAD COLLEGE FOR MEDICAL & TECHNICAL SCIENCES
- (27) [rahha:l saba]
* Rahal Saba

It is obvious that the first Romanized words of each TT in the examples above are transliterated wrongly. The initial syllable of each word in 22 -25 is lacking the diacritic (or short vowel) *a* in *ZMANI* for *ZAMANI* 'my era', *SMA* for *SAMA* 'sky', *AL-RYAN* for *AL-RAYAN* '(in Islam) a name of a gate in Paradise for fasting people', and *Al-Sfeer* for *Al-Safeer* 'the ambassador', respectively. Missing this diacritic in the transliteration process brings about the emergence of initial consonant clusters which are not permissible in the Arabic syllable system. In reality, this kind of faulty transliteration is very common practice not only on the part of translators, but also even on the part of some Arab scholars and linguists. In 26 and 27, the semi- vowel *w* in *AL-ROWAD* and the pharyngeal fricative *h* in *Rahal* needs to be geminated or doubled in order to get *AL-ROWWAD* 'the pioneers', and *Rahhal* 'a traveler'. Errors related to the gemination process are as serious as those discussed in 22 -25, especially when we know that unlike English, gemination in Arabic serves a significant morphological and semantic function. The non-existence of gemination in *AL-ROWWAD* and *Rahhal* renders the former meaningless and changes the latter into a verb, meaning '(he) left'.

Translating some shop names are sometimes interesting as well as problematic. This phenomenon refers to cases which involve a mixture of transliteration and translation as it can be revealed by the following examples.

- (28) [saydaliyyat ash-sha:riqah]
*ALSHARJAH PHARMACY
- (29) [markiz mara:si:m al-ima:ra:t]
*Maraseem AL emirates
- (30) [markiz an-ni:l lil-ittisa:la:t]
*AL-NILE CENTER FOR TELECOM

The striking errors in the three signs above refer to the inappropriate translation of the proper nouns *ALSHARJAH* 'Sharja, a city in UAE', *ALemirates* '(United Arab) Emirates', and *AL-NILE* 'the Nile'. The translation problem is that the translator attaches the Arabic definite article *al-* 'the', as a transliteration, to the proper nouns *Sharja*, *Emirates*, and *Nile* as a translation. The prefixation of *al-* can be explained by the fact that *al-* is considered an integral part of these Arabic nouns, so the translator thinks that it should be attached to their English equivalents. It is a well-known fact that proper nouns are usually transliterated rather than translated (see 6.2.5 below for more detail). The case is, however, different here. The proper nouns in 28 and 30 can be either transliterated as *Ash-Sha:riqah*, and *Al-Ni:l* to refer to the city of *Sharja*, and the river of *the Nile*, respectively or can be translated as *Sharja* and *the Nile*. *Emirates* in 29 is an exception. It can only be transliterated as *Al-Ima:ra:t* since it occurs as a constituent part of a proper noun in the form of noun phrase whose first element, *maraseem* 'regulations', is a transliteration, and in this case if the Arabic word *al-imaaraat* is translated, it yields the unacceptable phrase *Maraseem AL emirates*. Translation is prior to transliteration in 28 and 30 because the aforementioned Arabic proper names obviously have what is known in translation as "standard indigenous English equivalents" (Dickins et al. 2002: 36), which are in this case *Sharja* and *the Nile*. So, where there is a standard indigenous English equivalent, a translator would be expected to use this, except where there is a compelling reason not to do so as it is the case in 29.

To sum up, it can be said that transliterating shop names in the way shown in all examples above is not only wrong and unacceptable, but also totally unhelpful in translation as it generates exotic items that can be more confusing than helpful.

6.2.5 Inappropriate Lexical Choice

This type of translation errors represents the highest frequency of occurrence as mentioned above. This can be explained by the fact that selecting the correct lexical equivalents involves dealing with linguistic, cultural and social features in both SL and TL. The process of translation involves not just a transfer of an ST into TT, but a transfer from one culture to another. General cultural differences are sometimes bigger obstacles to successful translation than linguistic differences. In this case literal or word-for-word translation would not help.

Unfortunately, the strategy of word-for-word translation is still a frequently employed strategy at present, leading to English signs of poor readability and acceptability. In fact, this technique can be applied to some signs but not to all of them.

The other aspect which should be taken into consideration in this regard is the special linguistic construction of shop signs. The linguistic construction of shop signs differs from that of public signs and many other textual discourse. Public signs usually include sentences or even short paragraphs, like the texts appear on public warnings, instructions, road markers, traffic signs, travel signs, government slogans, etc. On the other hand, shop signs operate usually at the micro level of words, phrases and compounds. In my data, only two signs are found to include sentential elements added as additional information and not a part of the shop name. As a result “a sole lexical item can sometimes ruin the overall intended message of the shop sign. This vulnerability might be accounted for by the fact that shop signs are normally encapsulated in short linguistic structures; that is, their structures do not exceed that of words, phrases, and compounds. This linguistic property makes each word enjoy a greater semantic status than it would have in other larger structures” (Al-Kharabsheh et al. 2008: 720- 721).

Translation errors which are resulted due to the inappropriate lexical choice vary a lot. They can be elaborated in the subsections below.

6.2.5.1 The Translation of Proper Names

Grammatically speaking, specific names assigned to places are considered “proper nouns/ names”. So, any name given to a business store and appear on a shop sign is dealt with as a proper name. It is a well-known fact that proper names are not usually translated (see for example Newmark (1988a), and Fourment-Berni Canani (1994) (as cited in Edelman (2009)). The main reason behind that is that proper names have no connotations and are the same in most languages. The problem with this category of errors is that most of the shop names are translated literally which is considered as an error and against the above-mentioned rule. The following examples will make the point clear.

- (31) [al-ami:r lil-hila:qah]
*Prince Barbershop
- (32) [saydaliyyat al-qana:'ah]
*Content Pharmacy
- (33) [mata:'im al-bahha:r]
*SAILOR RESTAURANT
- (34) [al-wataniyyah li-safariyya:t]
*National Travel

Here, the translator of the shop signs in 31- 34 (and in other 19 shop signs) resorts to the literal translation of the shop names *al-ami:r*, *al-qana:'ah*, *al-bahha:r*, and *al-wataniyyah* to their TT equivalents *Prince*, *Content*, *SAILOR*, and *National*, respectively. The appropriate translation of such proper names would be simply the use of the technique of transliteration. Most of errors attested in this category are not serious but sometimes confusing. Take, for example, the translation of the shop name *al-qana:'ah* into *content* in 32. The English equivalent *content* has many denotations, one of them is ‘satisfaction’ which is meant by the Arabic name *al-qana:'ah*. The TT reader may not get the exact meaning intended by the shop owner. Similarly, translating the shop name *al-wataniyyah* in 34 as *National* distorts the reader’s attention. The travel agency advertised in the shop sign may be understood as an agency which is restricted only to ‘domestic’ flights while it is not. The use of literal translation here is caused not only by the translator’s unawareness of the translation rule stated above but also by the tendency to use as many ‘pure’ English elements on a shop sign as possible. This tendency is in turn motivated by the desire on the part of shop owners to show keeping abreast to modernity, a factor thought to affect attitudes and subsequently boost sales. So, it can be safely generalized that the literal translation of some proper names are not only sometimes wrong and unacceptable, but also totally unhelpful in translation as it generates bizarre items that can be more misleading than helpful.

6.2.5.2 Culturally-Based Translation

Bugheşiu (2011: 45) states that “in the context of globalization, shop names in the public space have the potential of becoming mediators between two given cultures that concur to their creation: the source-culture and the target-culture.” Signs in the public space cannot be denied as one of the main carriers of ethnological culture, and the meaning of the signs should not only implicate the entity but also connote the notion of the culture.

Therefore, shop sign translation from Arabic to English is not only a bilingual activity, but also a bicultural activity. Lexical choice errors involve problems within a specific context due to cultural differences. The choice to translate a concept in SL may be culturally based. Sometimes, even if translators have enough language proficiency to convey the literal meaning of an Arabic expression in English, readers of the shop sign may not understand the culture motivating the sign. Consider the following shop signs as examples.

- (35) [mujawhara:t qamar 14]
*Moon face for jewelry
- (36) [abi:r ash-sharq li-arqa al-utu:r wa l-'u:d]
*FOR HIGH CLASS PERFUMES AND AOOD ABEER ALSHARQ
- (37) [al-khawla:ni liz-zabi:b wa l-mukassara:t wa l-bun al-yamani]
*AL KAWLANI GRABS ALMKONDS
- (38) [al-mana:r li-safariyya:t wa siya:hah wa khadama:t al-hajj wa l-umrah]
*MANAR TRAVEL HAJ & UMRAH DIVISION
- (39) [mat'am wa mikba:zat ash-shayba:ni al-hadi:th]
*Al-Shaibani Modern Restaurant and Mokhbazah

As mentioned above and as it is clear from the examples above, a single lexical item can sometimes destroy the general intended message of the shop sign due to first the socio-cultural difference between SL and TL, and second due to the peculiar linguistic structure of shop sign texts which don't exceed the form of words, phrases and compounds, a linguistic property makes each word enjoy a greater semantic status than it would have in other larger texts. In 35, for instance, the problem lies in the translation of the SL expression *qamar 14*. It literally refers to one of the moon phases, that is the 'full moon' in the 14th day of every lunar month. In Arabic culture, (full) moon is a symbol of women beauty. This expression, therefore, is usually used as a cultural metaphor standing for 'a beautiful woman' and originally came from Egyptian Arabic, namely *amar arba'ta:shar* and occasionally used in Yemeni Arabic, too. Ghazala (2008: 152) argues that cultural metaphors "create a tremendous problem in translation because they cannot be translated or understood directly ... Their meanings are cultural-specific and have no relation to their individual words." The translator of this sign did his best by choosing the equivalent *Moon face*. The TL reader, however, would not be able to get the intended message because the conceptual meaning of *Moon face* is still vague and hence unacceptable. To avoid vagueness and unintelligibility and since *qamar 14* refers to the shop name, it can be simply transliterated as *qamar 14* or *qamar arbata:shar*, or even by using the intended meaning of the Arabic expression which can be something like "The Beautiful Lady", for example.

Apart from the word order error which can be checked in 21 in section (6.2.3) above, the translation strategy used in 36 is totally different. Here, the translator transliterated the term *AOOD* where he should not. Instead of using the most appropriate TL equivalent, *incense* for the lexical item *AOOD*, the translator resorts to transliteration thinking that this aromatic substance is not a part of Western culture and as a result has no equivalent in English while it is. The same can be said for 39. *Mokhbazah* is a transliteration of a word in Yemeni Arabic that refers to a bakery which produces a special Yemeni bread in comparison to those bakeries producing normal loaves. Because of this particularity, the translator prefers *Mokhbazah* to *bakery*. But the transliterated *Mokhbazah* makes no sense to the foreigner or TL reader, so the equivalent *bakery* fits more in TL version.

GRABS and *ALMKONDS* in 37 and *DIVISION* in 38 are incorrect lexical choices. They are employed to stand for *raisins*, *nuts*, and *services*, respectively. The mistranslation of these three lexical items makes the two shop signs convey a wrong message: in fact the first business sells *raisins* (dried grapes), but not *grapes*, and *nuts*, but not only *almonds*, and the second business provides hajj and umrah (pilgrimage) *services*, but not *divisions*. It can be said that an essential factor that may contribute to such wrong lexical choices is the translator's incompetence in TL.

6.2.5.3 Informativeness Errors

Errors caused by loss or change of information in TL message are usually classified in the literature as mistranslation on the cultural level (see Liu 2013). The basic purpose of translation lies in the actual realization of the effective communicative value of the source language as well as the successful conveyance of utterance information. In the context of shop signs, however, the translator may omit certain information of the source language by following a "reductionist approach" in translation as Al-Kharabsheh et al. (2008) call it.

The reasons vary: some cases of information loss are caused by the translator's carelessness, some other cases may be caused by spatial considerations governed by the size and cost of sign compelling the translator to be short and brief in the translation of shop signs. In many cases, this sort of translation behavior can totally change the message and a distorted intention will emerge.

The data analysis reveals that there are many instances of shop signs whose TT suffer from information loss in various degrees. This phenomenon can be exemplified by the following signs.

- (40) [magha:sil ba:ri:s al-hadi:thah]
*PARIS
- (41) [i:zu:n lil-intarnit
qism kha:s li al'a:b ash-shabakah
mabi:'a:t ajhizat kumbu:tar
tajhi:z mahalla:t intarnit]
*E-ZONE
- (42) [bayt abi:r]
utu:ra:t- mustahdhra:t tajmi:l]
*ABBER HOUSE
- (43) [maktabat yaman balaas
Khadama:t maktabiyyah- qirta:siyyah- madrasiiyyah]
*Yemen Plus

The sample examples above show that the messages conveyed in TL are incomplete. Some parts of the TL are missing. In all signs above, only a single word or a pair of words which all refer to the shop names are only translated. In 40, the translated item *PARIS* doesn't tell us or indicate that this store is a *modern dry-cleaner's*. The situation is even worse in 41; a lot of information has been left out. The SL version of the shop sign says that this store provides a variety of services: internet, internet games, selling computer systems, and installing internet cafés with the necessary equipment. Moreover, the prefixed *E* in *E-ZONE* may increase the perplexedness of the foreign reader; he/ she may think that this store is only selling electronics or the like. Similarly, the details of *for perfume and cosmetics* in 42 and *Stationery/ office and school stationary* in 43 have been dropped out leaving the foreign reader/ client mislead again. Rendering the shop names *ABBER HOUSE* and *Yemen Plus* into TL alone would not help compensate the lost information.

The improper omission of such information is motivated by the shop owners' desire to appear more fashionable and more modern by employing "any English" on their signs apart from whether "this any English" has conveyed the intended message or not. This sort of tendency is explained by the fact that translators render only the names of shop signs which have nothing to do with the conveyance of the shop sign's message. The improper omission here is also induced by spatial considerations governed by the size and cost of the sign, compelling the shop owner/ translator to reduce TT to its minimum limit. The price of each shop sign in Yemen is usually calculated according to the size (in meter or even centimeter) of that sign. That's why the shop signs in 40- 43 above look very small and have no room for adding any extra information.

The another category in this section involves cases where there is a change in the information translated rather than information loss. See the signs below as examples.

- (44) [ittisa:la:t- intarnit]
*STAND BY Center
- (45) [ma'had hut layn lil-kumbiyu:tar]
*Hot Line Internet Café
- (46) [Ajwa'a li-ahdath al-azya'a]
*Ajwa for Trading

In the bilingual signs above, there is a drastic change in the content of the TL version, a change that leads to a contradiction between the ST and its corresponding translation. The SL message in 44 states that this type of business provides the service of telecommunication and internet, but the translation *STAND BY Center* is totally different. 45 is even more serious. The business is a computer institute, not an internet café. So, instead of getting *Hot Line Computer Institute*, we get *Hot Line Internet Café*.

Translation error of information change may not only disturb the client/ foreign reader, but it may also affect the business itself by reducing the promotion value of the shop signs. In other words, the client may change his/ her mind upon feeling confused about the service provided by this business. In 46, the SL *for the latest fashion (li-ahdath al-azya'a)* is rendered into a more general TL term *Trading*. The only explanation behind committing such errors in 44 - 46 is simply the translator's carelessness because it is not hard to find TL equivalents for the SL elements appear on these shop signs.

7. Conclusion

The brief linguistic analysis of shop signs has revealed that the current situation of the translation of signs in the streets of big cities in Yemen like Sana'a still suffers from deficiency and is not satisfactory. A large number of signs contain errors of different types and varying levels of seriousness. Translation problems found in the present shop sign data generally occur in three categories of errors: spelling, grammatical and lexical, with the last having the highest frequency. The various cases of poorly translated English signs present foreign readers with exotic messages which consequently lead to confusion and frustration. Causes that stand behind these kinds of errors include translator's language incompetence, translator's carelessness, the socio-cultural differences between English and Arabic and mother tongue interference. More specifically, it can be stated that high-frequency errors, which deal with the incorrect lexical choices and literal translation, have come about partly due to the failure of translator's to pay adequate heed to semantic boundaries between lexical items in English and Arabic as well as to the failure to stick to the rule prohibiting verbatim translation of proper nouns.

With the existence of a fairly large number of errors in Yemeni bilingual shop signs, as elaborated in this work, there is a need for their treatment and rectification. We, therefore, recommend a set of procedures which may help make an end to or, at least, reduce translation errors of shop signs.

1. The nature of the written texts found on shop signs which usually appear in the form of single words, compounds or phrases may encourage novice or inexperienced translators to resort only to a dictionary. Depending solely on bilingual dictionaries in translating shop signs is not advisable because adopting the conventional dictionary translation would usually incur unacceptable translation loss. Using the dictionary, therefore, is one but not the only technique of translation. Equivalents taken from dictionaries may need to be further adapted so as to convey the SL message in a particular socio-cultural setting in an appropriate manner.
2. The use of inferior translation software should be avoided. Commercial sign translation should be done professionally so that signs can introduce the reader/ foreigner to the richness of Arabic culture without making them stop at the language barrier.
3. As stated in the Introduction section, the present generation has a very strong desire to learn English. Day by day, the number of young Yemenis who are bilingual in English is noticeably increasing. The motivation of using English to show modernity and prestige is no more sufficient. Shop owners should realize that their shop signs are being exposed to more and more local customers who may know English very well, and such signs must be free from any sort of errors, otherwise it may cause a great deal of embarrassment and may also affect the saleability of their goods and services.
4. Translated materials should undergo strict processes of revision and editing by professional translators or at least by people who have a good command of both SL and TL. This procedure will help assess the translation work of shop signs and get an acceptable final product. At the same time, it requires translators to improve language training and knowledge, knowing about the cultural convention and way of behavior in the English-speaking countries. Also, in the translation process, translators need to scrutinize carefully each word, each phrase and be careful to treat every expression without any negligence.
5. Translators should preserve a high sense of responsibility and treat the translation work seriously. It should be noticed that shop sign translating is as hard as translation in other subjects, and sometimes it can be even more difficult. Under this situation, it is the translators' responsibility to improve their proficiency in both target language and source language in order to convey the intended messages of shop signs.
6. Lastly, and in terms of language policy, local authorities should have some kind of censorship over the work of shop sign translation, a task which can be assigned to a board of translation experts and specialists.

Translation of commercial shop signs is one of the serious linguistic issues. In order to avoid errors pertinent to translation, it requires great attention by translators, communicators, shop owners and the local authorities as well. The contribution of the present work is only a humble attempt.

More work on translation and language of shop signs is needed. The issue of shop signs has been investigated from a translational and linguistic perspective rather from a sociolinguistic or cultural point of view. As a further study of the present paper, a more detailed sociolinguistic study on shop signs is urgently needed in order to scrutinize the various reasons behind the occurrence of such linguistic deviations and translation errors.

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Appendix: A Sample of Mistranslated Shop Signs

Spelling



Grammar



Word Order



Transliteration



Inappropriate Lexical Choice

A. Proper Names



B. Culturally-Based Translation



C. Informativeness

